

“A car called Lady Penelope”

Preamble

From time to time we entertain visitors at The Elan Factory and this makes life interesting for all concerned. There are also some occasions which are more memorable than others and this recollection is one of those days.

This all began when two Lotus owners met on the internet when try to sell their respective cars. These two individuals soon realised they were looking at each other cars and wanting to carry out an exchange. The only problem was one lived in Melbourne and the other lived in Sydney (only 950 kms apart) To resolve the distance problem, the owner of the R300 Caterham decided to trailer the car to Melbourne and rendezvous at The Elan Factory. Being a very particular Caterham 7 owner, George meticulously packed the car on a trailer and carefully taped the windscreen and nose-cone to avoid any stone chip damage during the road trip. On the day in question Gavin, the owner of the Type 25 Elise had to travel from Geelong to The Elan Factory which was some 85kms.

The idea was to meet up and examine each others car before deciding to take the final step and exchange ownership. It is worth mentioning that these two vehicles are extraordinary examples of their respective Marques.

This all happened on a very hot day during March 2006 and has left an ever-lasting impression of fun and lots of big grins.

To this end, the new owner of the Caterham 7 wrote an excited recollection of the day's events to a long time pal currently living and working in Hong Kong.



The following is an extract of an email recalling the initial encounter with the new Caterham R300.

Hi

Well it's as hot as hell here ...

I left Geelong at about 2.00pm ..

I got to Steve's around 5.30pm ... sh*t of a trip across town

Sitting in Steve's carport was the yellow 7 with all front panels off, and Steve was going over it with his fine tooth comb.

He looked up, and gave me a grin that said heaps ...

It was then I noticed a man similar in dress and look to the professor from Back to the Future. He was the only new face at Steve's place , and because I did not know this person ...I assumed this must be George , the owner of the 7 ..

Wild woolly, curly hair ... sort of Larry Fine from the 3 stooges in look

Big, darting eyes

Time had left its mark across his face.....

He appeared a lot older then his voice led me to believe over the phone ... about 30 years older ...

I thought he was a KILLA age ... [Gavin Kronberg] (Killa as In James Killingsworth) *(NOTE: KILLA = James Killingsworth nick name)*

We exchanged greetings and we started to check out each others cars

The First impression of the Cat was " Orrr my god ... this is beautiful "

The Caterham Motorsport engine nestled in the front of the cat is a thing of beauty.....

We all did a visual check over on Lewis first, which was rather quick, and we all then turned to the Cat ... *(NOTE: Lewis is the name of the Type 25 Elise)*

Gary (Steve's under cover ex Williams F1 engineer....come driver) was standing back quietly taking it all in

George, we discovered has an interesting view on life ... and it appears he would trust Saddam H with his wallet, while he went to the toilet ...

He has brought enough spares with him to make another car just missing a chassis (a bit of over exaggeration ... but he has a heap ... all nicely packed in their Caterham boxes)

Anyway as I looked closer, I thought ...hmm this is a bit dirty, a bit..... Finger marks everywhere ...

I was then shown the polystyrene, tape, cork, foam remains of wrapping George had on the car to protect it from the trip on the trailer he had basically covered the car in the stuff, and it looked a bit dirty due to the effort to get it all off and a bit of remaining residue

So I jumped in the drivers seat

It felt familiar, sitting in this 7 , but different , smells like a cat *(NOTE: Not like a pussy cat but more like a Cat-erham)*

Started her up bang pack wallop ... crackle then purrrrrrrr

All looks good, seats feel better then the Elise Gary is convinced he needs to go for a run in a 7, so he jumps on in next to me ...

Blip ... pop ... crackle ... as I give her a few rev's to accommodate the 2nd gear down change ...>

Nice and smooth ...

Cross hairs on the left wheel aim for the apex...

Right foot back onto the loud pedal followed by a sensation not felt much in the Elise a slowly recognised sensation that the rear is trying to get through the corner quicker than the front

Right foot backs off all back to normal grab 3rd elbow hits tunnel indentation again hmmm

We get up to 5th on the next straight, and see a 4WD disappear around the next right hander

Bugger

Once again we line up the bobbing front wheels ... this time the right one ... its on my side ... I can hit this apex perfectly ...

Blip ... pop my subconscious has found a better spot for my elbow we slot 2nd

Point to where we want to go power back on ...

The rear starts to drift ... but we are ready this time right foot stays where it is, but gains weight

Think quick you remember this use your arms

Probably the best power slide I can remember hit 3rd ... and we are up the arse of the 4WD

Bugger

Then God waves his mighty hand he can see this is heading to one hell of a Blatt ... and he was not going to let anyone spoil it

God has a quick word to the driver of the 4WD, who we can only assume to be a car lover or a rider of motorbikes pulls into the dirt on the left and waves us past ...

What joy Gary gives a good imitation of the Queens wave as we pass ... and in a second he has left our mirrorsnever seen again

The car has started to meld with me the front wheels are my eyes and arms, my legs no longer work as they should, they don't run they make small movements in the foot and I am sprinting

The hand brake in the tunnel is no longer an issue....

Left
Right
Left
Left

Pop.... crackle blurp

We arrive at Sassafra

Best fun I have had in ages

To be CONTINUED ...